

**SPECIAL MEETING  
BOARD OF MAYOR AND ALDERMEN  
(PUBLIC HEARING – FY2005 BUDGET)**

**April 19, 2004**

**6:00 PM**

Mayor Baines called the meeting to order.

Mayor Baines called for the Pledge of Allegiance, this function being led by Alderman Forest.

A moment of silent prayer was observed.

The Clerk called the roll.

Present: Aldermen Roy, Gatsas, Guinta, Osborne, Porter, O’Neil, Lopez,  
Shea, DeVries, Garrity, Smith, Thibault, Forest

Absent: Aldermen Sysyn

Mayor Baines advised that the purpose of the special meeting is a public hearing to receive comments on the proposed Fiscal Year 2005 municipal budget, the proposed Community Improvement Program for the Fiscal Year 2005 to FY2010 period in accordance with the procedures established in RSA 44:10, consideration of establishing expendable trusts for the Manchester School District in accordance with the provisions of RSA 198:20, and in satisfaction of any other local, state or federal law that may apply. Mayor Baines noted that the Clerk shall present the resolutions, the subject of which contain all of the appropriations presently proposed, following which a brief presentation may be made and public comments will be heard.

The Clerk presented the proposed Appropriating Resolutions:

“Raising Monies and Making Appropriations for the Fiscal Year 2005.”

“A Resolution appropriating to the Manchester Aggregation Program the sum of \$834,682 from Aggregation Fees for the Fiscal Year 2005.”

“A Resolution appropriating to the Manchester Airport Authority the sum of \$44,898,329 from Special Airport Revenue Funds for Fiscal Year 2005.”

“A Resolution appropriating the sum of \$2,890,903 from Recreation User Charges to the Recreation Division for Fiscal Year 2005.”

“A Resolution appropriating the sum of \$14,584,987 from Sewer User Rental Charges to the Environmental Protection Division for Fiscal Year 2005.”

“A Resolution appropriating to the Manchester Transit Authority the sum of \$1,061,785 for the Fiscal Year 2005.”

“A Resolution appropriating to the Manchester School District the sum of \$138,500,000 for the Fiscal Year 2005.”

“A Resolution appropriating to the Manchester School Food and Nutrition Services Program the sum of \$5,162,270 from School Food and Nutrition Services Revenues for Fiscal Year 2005.”

“Appropriating all Incremental Meals and Rooms Tax Revenue Received by the City in Fiscal Year 2005 and held in the Civic Center Fund, for the payment of the City’s Obligations in Said Fiscal Year Under the Financing Agreement.”

“A Resolution appropriating to the Central Business Service District the sum of \$225,000 from Central Business Service District Funds for Fiscal Year 2005.”

“Continuation of the Central Business Service District.”

“Approving the Community Improvement Program for 2005, Raising and Appropriating Monies Therefore, and Authorizing Implementation of Said Program.”

“Establishing a Manchester School District Capital Projects Expendable Trust.”

“Establishing a Manchester School District Facilities Maintenance and Repair Expendable Trust.”

“Establishing a Manchester School District Health Maintenance Expendable Trust.”

“Establishing a Manchester School District Athletic Equipment Expendable Trust.”

“Establishing a Manchester School District Special Education Expendable Trust.”

Mayor Baines stated before I begin tonight I would like to review the process for tonight’s public hearing on the budget. Speakers need to sign in on the sheets at the back of the chamber and will be recognized to speak in the order that they signed in. Speakers will have three minutes to speak and will be notified when their time is up.

Mayor Baines continued tonight I am presenting a responsible budget to the people of Manchester. A budget that was created by making some difficult decisions that I believe will strongly position Manchester for the future. This is a budget that utilizes the smart fiscal policies adopted by the Aldermen over the past year and a budget that thoughtfully provides for our schools. There is a renewed sense of pride in Manchester that is the result of smart planning and budgeting. Manchester Airport continues to be a key economic engine for our city. The Verizon Wireless Arena continues to break attendance records. Gill Stadium has been renovated, promising to be the best high school sports facility in the northeast. We have a downtown that continues to grow by attracting more businesses and people into our inner city. We have new civic pride for our schools as we continue the transformation of creating the best public schools in the state. We are building a senior center, fixing our parks and playgrounds, constructing a state-of-the art water treatment facility, and we have opened a new fire station on East Industrial Drive, thus protecting lives in the high-growth area of our city. This is only a partial listing of the progress we have made in our city. Are city services

better? The answer is clearly yes. We should all be very proud of what we have accomplished together over the past four years, as we have built upon the accomplishments of those who served before us. Manchester has been able to accomplish this rebirth in this fragile economy because of the tough choices we have made over the past few years. While other cities are losing their cash reserves and are cutting essential services, Manchester is investing in its future by taking advantage of low interest rates and debt financing. This budget maintains the current level of services that the citizens of Manchester expect and strengthens our essential services by supporting our first responders – police, firefighters and health professionals. We are working to ensure that our city is the safest city in America. Our school system is on the verge of greatness as we work to ensure that all students learn in an educational environment worthy of them. Investment in children is one of the most important investments of any community. I have proposed consolidation plans in the past that would allow the City to save money while providing better service. While I have not included such consolidation plans in this year's budget, I welcome and support an effort by the Aldermen to vote for the restructuring proposals I have presented in the past. Over time these proposals will save millions of dollars and clearly demonstrate to the public that government is willing to change to bring about efficiencies and even better services. This is a budget that is tight on the expense side and is not built around inflated revenues. This is also a budget that does not call for layoffs of City or school employees. I present a budget that represents a 5.1 percent increase in expenditures from last year. In fact, in looking back at all of my combined budgets since I have been mayor we have been able to maintain a moderate increase in expenditures that average only 4.8 percent per year. This is in stark contrast to the budgets of the previous five years before I took office. During that period the City saw increases in expenditures on an average of 7.4 percent. The myth that spending is out of control is not supported by the facts. I am happy to report that Manchester is in good shape financially, and we are at a good place for this uncertain economy. Let's work to sustain our steady progress that has resulted in an improved quality of life for our citizens. Businesses want to invest in Manchester because our City has shown great confidence while other communities have not. We have a well managed city that is planning for future growth. Projects such as Hackett Hill, Granite Street widening and the riverfront development will position us for the future as we expand the City's tax base. Just look around and I know you will agree that Manchester is only getting better. The investments that we are making now will only help us in the future. Let me take a moment to break out a few examples. Taking into account that every \$1 million of the budget equals .19 cents on the tax rate on an average home valued at \$150,000. That means that if you cut \$1 million from the school budget it would cut \$28.50 from the average property tax bill. So by funding the new Cohas Brook fire station it added only \$34.20 to the average tax bill. Or by funding the two new Assessor's positions and the graffiti removal position it adds \$2.99 to the average tax bill. The budget I presented is now in the hands of the Aldermen. I am encouraged by their willingness to work with this budget and by their thoughtful consideration of the future investments in our great City. There is a lot of common ground

between my budget and the ones being put forward by the various Aldermen. Let's work to ensure a better Manchester for all of our citizens.

Mayor Baines continued with his power point presentation. Because of the moderate winter we have been able to make up for the funding of pension obligations, which we can't count on doing two years in row. We also had one-time revenues used this past year. We had full funding for the new fire station. Again, ask the residents of Ward 6 if they feel safer now in Alderman Porter's ward. They now have the same response to the City in emergencies that any other resident of the City of Manchester has. Just think if you're at risk with your home or your children or your loved one, in an emergency response is it worth it, I say it's worth it. That's a better service that we're providing for the citizens. CDBG is funding from the Federal government. We lost approximately 5 percent, \$130,000 and we used that money to do a lot of great things in the City, especially from funding organizations that really benefit the overall well being of the community. The cost of the school debt service. Again, we decided as a community that we wanted to fix all of our schools and we bonded \$105 million and we worked with the surrounding towns to help cover the debt service related to additions and renovations to the high schools. But there's a cost for that and the School District had to absorb approximately \$2 million on their side. So when you look at the overall increase in the school, you have to understand that a good portion of what we're talking about is to fix the schools for our kids. And I don't think there are many people in the community that are arguing that for the first time in the history of Manchester we fixing all of the schools in Manchester. But you have to pay for that. Just like we had to pay for the new fire station. Just like we have to pay for the new senior center on the West Side. Those are services for the community. And the adequacy grant uncertainty that exists in Concord and the economy. We have a still rather fragile economy that is recovering, but it is starting to recover and that's good news but it's something we need to watch consistently. Challenges; budgets based on actual compliment. So when we develop the salary line item of the budget working with all the agencies, Finance Department, Human Resources, it was based on the actual compliment. We have to deal with retirements and cost of living because we're negotiations with 16 unions. It includes to additional assessing positions that I talked about earlier. A lot of communities are required to go through the reevaluation of property very four years. There are communities like Londonderry that do it yearly and they do it in house. A lot of communities have moved that responsibility in house to avoid going out and spending millions of dollars to an outside agency to come do it. I believe that's best done by people within the community who live and work in the community. There was a Finance vacancy and returns a position, which has been sorely missed. The head of the Economic Development office. At a time when we're having unprecedented interest and investment in the community, we do not have an economic development director in the City. Find any city our size without that position. The FY2005 budget overall allocation \$252.76 million; City allocation \$113.2 million; school allocation \$138.5 million; and Manchester Transit Authority \$1.06. A 5.1 percent increase over FY2004 combined with City, school and Manchester Transit Authority. Again, without the school project, it would be around 4.6

percent. City spending increasing about 3.8 percent. That's not spending gone wild. I think Nashua's budget, and we gave copies to the Aldermen, overall spending in the Mayor's budget down in Nashua increased school spending 7 percent, and police and fire each over 5 percent; overall increase around 4.7 percent. School spending 5.8 percent. Manchester Transit Authority spending increase 24.9 percent, that is adding a step saver program to provide service for some of the most vulnerable people in our community, that's matched with Federal dollars. It's about \$200,000, we get \$400,000 out of that because it's doubled by the Federal government. Much needed service that the Manchester Transit Authority can speak to themselves when they come before the Board to present their budget. Our obligations to maintain the highest level of public safety in these uncertain times and we should not retreat from that. That's why we opened the new fire station when communities across New England are closing fire stations. I will never support, nor do I believe the Aldermen would support, cutting back on public safety. Full year funding for the Cohas Brook station; that added \$400,000. We phased it in, got some criticism for doing that, but we had to do it that, now the full funding, it's about \$1.2 million to operate that fire station for a full year. Again, ask the citizens of Ward 6 whether that's worth it. I think they'll say yes; I know they'll say yes. Additional savings; how can we save money. We can institute responsible recycling, which does not have much political favor, but it's the right thing to do. And at some point in time we're going to be forced to do it because they are going close the facility in Rochester where we're transporting our things now. For every 10 percent we increase recycling, we save the City in cash \$300,000. Think about that. Every 10 percent increase in recycling, saves the City in cash \$300,000, and yet there is tremendous to that, and that's fine. But there will be a time when the City is going to be forced to do it because at a certain point in time we are going to be told by the State and Federal governments that you have to recycle. Consolidations; I'm very pleased to start getting some support for consolidations. My predecessor put forward a lot of the similar plans for consolidations; they have never gotten political support, yet there are real dollars to save with consolidation. Just Public Works alone, estimated savings, approximately \$300,000 and that's probably on the light side. Fleet management; there's a new report that's out that's going to get consideration of City government about consolidating fleet management and looking eventually to have all fleet be maintained in one central building, that's a cost savings that we're going to work very hard to put into the future. One-man refuse trucks; looking at a similar project like they've done in Nashua, where they provide the citizens with a receptacle that you back up and it hooks onto the back and they dump it into the back. We're asking for that on an experimental basis. Again, this is the School District budget and no teacher layoffs. Let's look at the trend of spending because one of the things unfortunately because of the way the local media takes information and puts a certain spin on it and then people in the community start to believe it. So this is prepared by the Finance Department. This is what happens with spending the prior five years. Increases in spending from the previous year. That's what's been happening with spending here and again, this is the proposal that's in there now. It's a difference between...the five years prior to us sitting in this chamber; the average increase was 7.37 percent. The average increase over the past five years is 4.81

percent. One of the largest increases in the history, in terms of spending, occurred in the year before I became Mayor, 16.64 percent. That was the year the City received the Adequacy Grant from Concord and the money was spent in one lump sum and taxes were actually reduced but the spending went up 16.64 percent. These two budgets here were the first two years of the Yarger-Decker study that you've been hearing a lot about. When I came into office there were contractual agreements with the adoption of the Yarger-Decker that were locked in the first two years that I was Mayor. We didn't have any choice. They were within all the contracts signed by the City. In fact, some of the first budgets that I looked at we had some departments coming in with 17 and 18 percent increases in their budget because of the implementation of the pay study and negotiated contracts. That's what has happened in reality over that period of time. Not as you've read in the local daily newspaper. As I said earlier, cutting \$1 million from the schools would save the average property owner \$28.50. Adding the new fire station is the actual cost of full implementation of the Cohas Brook station \$34.20. When you build a new fire station, you have to pay for it. Positions for the Assessor and graffiti removal will add \$2.99 to the average property owners' bill. That's the end of my presentation. Thank you very much for listening.

Mayor Baines advised that the meeting shall be open to public comment; that each person when recognized shall come to the nearest microphone, state their name and address in a clear and loud voice for the record; that each person shall be given one opportunity to speak and comments shall be limited to three minutes to allow all participants the opportunity to speak; that once all present have been allowed to speak should there be a topic not discussed those wishing to speak a second time shall be provided the opportunity to do so.

Peter Ramsey, 80 Hanover Street, The Palace Theatre, stated:

I brought along the Chairman of the Board of the Palace Theatre Trust Dr. Sylvio Dupuis, who has spent some time in the chamber. I will be very short. In 1999 the Palace Theatre doors were closed. In the past four years the Board of Directors of the Palace Theatre Trust have raised millions of dollars to keep the Theatre alive. Without your support the Palace Theatre would not be here. That's a fact that's undebateable. Without the support of the City of Manchester, the Palace Theatre would not be here. The Theatre will never make a profit. It's an economic generator for downtown, last year we brought over 100,000 patrons to downtown who spent money downtown and spent time here. We are proud to say it has become a community center for the City as evidenced by many, many, many different events. The stage last year was used 320 days. If any of you want to, I will be happy to send you a detailed packet of our audited budget or any other information and thank you very much for the opportunity.

Dr. Sylvio Dupuis, Chairman, Board of the Palace Theatre Trust, stated:

I just really came to say thank you to the Board of Mayor and Aldermen for their understanding and their support and the question is sometimes asked about what is the private sector doing. In the last year through a capital campaign we have raised \$1.2 million.

We will spend a couple hundred thousand dollars this summer in the interior of the Theatre, we have purchased and cleaned up the Athens building, getting that ready for a cultural arts center, and since 1999 500,000 adults, 100,000 young men and women, have used the Palace Theatre and I would say that if we're not through the impetus of the Board of Mayor and Aldermen in providing the first \$75,000 and having done that on an annual basis, our fund raising would not be as effective. People ask us every day when we're out there, saying what does the City do? Is the City involved? Does the City commit to economic development? So I want to thank you for your past support, thank you for your foresight, and for making a real difference in our community.

Karen Baranowski, 60 Riverfront Drive, stated:

I'm here on behalf of Home Health and Hospice Care. We are a significant health care professional providing agency in your community and we have offices in Manchester on 60 Riverfront Drive. Our goal is to actually provide care to your constituents and to keep them in their homes, which ends up being less costly than institutional care. We are a preferred provider of Catholic Medical Center, we also receive significant number of referrals from the Elliot Hospital and we own and operate the Community Hospice House in Merrimack, which is one of the two hospice houses in the State of New Hampshire. Last year we provided 16,911 home visits to Manchester residents and we delivered in addition to that \$29,540 in free care to Manchester residents. What I'm here today is to ask you to consider funding some of that free care so that we will be able to continue to provide care for your most needy constituents in the community. We understand that you may not be able to provide all of that \$29,000 in this fiscal climate, but we are looking for a nominal allocation that provides opportunity for future dialogue and to continue to provide that free care in the community.

Mariatou Scott, 221 Hanover Street, stated:

I'm from the New Hampshire African Information Center. I know you've seen me here many times. I'm here tonight to really request the City of Manchester to help us help immigrant and refugees coming to this city. As the Mayor stated in his statement, we want a better Manchester. We a lot of African here who need help. They need assistance in their homes, they need assistance at school, they need assistance for the language and any other thing they need, needs to be improved because those people are coming from refugee camps with no skill. But the center's mission is to assimilate all people of Africa descent into a social, cultural, economy, and political public of New Hampshire. So far we have done programs with less or no money. We are using our own pocket money to pay for our cost to the center for electric and any other bills we have to do we transport refugees and immigrants to other places so we really are requesting the City today at least to support our operating support. If we can not get money for the cultural center, we need money to support our financial expenses. As you can see, we have pictures here we have doing a program with the Catholic Medical Community Services doing food safety prevention, hygiene, and sanitation and we taught ESL classes last year. So we continue to provide services to the needy ones in the Manchester district.

Stephanie Lewry, 889 Elm Street, stated:

I'm the Executive Director of Intown Manchester. We are a non-profit organization dedicated to the goals of making our downtown the best place in New England to work, to live, and to play. This is a bold and ambitious goal, but we feel it's attainable and with your support we're ready to work hard for it. When we remember a city we have visited, any city, we think of its downtown. It is the downtown that exemplifies the character of a city, and it's the downtown experience that will make us decide whether to come back again. Intown has in many of its capacities, we do maintenance in downtown and we have recently employed three individuals from the Jac Pac job relocation center. They are doing a wonderful job keeping our sidewalks clean and I hope if you see them that you will say hi. Two of them speak Spanish and one of them is bilingual. But they need to know that they are doing a good job. So if you see them, please say hi and give them a big smile. On behalf of those for whom I work who are the people who have made a substantial investment in downtown, the commercial property owners, I'm here to thank you for the support that you have given our CIP requests, which help to make our downtown a great destination. You have acknowledged that the millyard is an urban business park that will continue to thrive and contribute to the City's tax base. With you support we are ready to implement Phase II of our three part millyard revitalization program. You understand that destination cities should look inviting at all times and this is accomplished when buildings look their best and people are working and are fully employed. We are working hard to keep our buildings looking up to date and attractive through our building improvement program. You recognize that citizens feel good about their community when they can come together on a warm sunny evening for free outdoor entertainment and return home happy to live in a city that gives something back to them. There is much to do to make Manchester into a real queen and we'll work hard to achieve this goal.

Gail Colglazier, 129 Amherst Street, stated:

As the Mayor said, I'm here with our Board Chairman Toni Pappas and I know also in the audience we have another one of our Trustees, Jane Beaulieu. We have Bonnie Doherty who teaches at Hallsville School and I know we have a number of our members here this evening as well. I think I speak on behalf of all of them. We are a non-profit organization, the Manchester Historic Association. We run our Millyard Museum on Commercial Street, we also have a research library and offer exhibits, public programs for adults and children, and we also offer a library. We are here to speak on behalf of all of those who use our services. The students, the teachers, the City residents, the business owners, City officials who use the programs and the services that our organization provides. Specifically we're requesting funding through the CIP program for our school programs and our research library. The City students and teachers visit our museum all year long. Last year we had close to 4,000 students and this year we expect about 4,500. Many of them are studying American history and one of the major components of their curriculum is the American Industrial Revolution. What better way to learn about it than to visit one of the buildings where it happened? A



visit to our museum in one of the Amoskeag textile mills buildings gives students a hands on experience that they can't get anywhere else. All kinds of City residents use our research library. People who own historic homes or buildings that they are restoring come to learn about their original use. People who have family members who worked in the mills and that's an awful lot of people here in Manchester. They come to trace their family history. Business owners and developers who are renovating historic buildings in the millyard or downtown come to use to determine when their buildings were built, how they were constructed, what they were used for, what they looked like when they were new, and how to go about restoring them. So we are an economic development resource in that sense. People in the City government. The Planning Department, the Parks Department, the Mayor's office, to name a few, come to us for the same sorts of information when they are making proposals to the Federal Government or to other funding sources for money for redevelopment or when they are working on the City's master plan. All of these people use our facilities at little or no cost. We're a non-profit and we rely on a number of funding sources including admission fees, memberships, donations, grants from the State and Federal governments, and from various foundations. We hope that CIP funds for our school program and for our library will be available to assist us in providing these services that Manchester citizens have come to expect and to appreciate.

Toni Pappas, Chairman, Manchester Historic Association, stated:

I would like to just add that we are asking for a small amount of money that would make a huge difference in a learning experience for our City school children, scholars and residents who want to learn about the history of Manchester. We have books and collections and documents that no one else has. We are a unique place, so any amount of support that you can give us would be greatly appreciated.

Robert Barry, 51 West Elmwood Avenue, stated:

I represent the Concerned Taxpayers of Manchester. I believe that the proposed tax increase would be a heavy burden if forced upon the property owners of Manchester. Social security recipients over the last three years have only received an aggregate of less than 6 percent and your administration is attempting to increase our tax by more than double that in only three years. It may be a good thing to finish the nature trail for the homeowners and taxpayers so that they could pitch their tents along it when they lose their homes to the increased taxes. I believe that the budget introduced by Alderman Guinta and Alderman Garrity will be far more bearable to the taxpayers of Manchester and deserve to be heard, discussed, trimmed even more, and then passed.

Jane Beaulieu, For Manchester, stated:

I have a suggestion. CIP funds, Intown Manchester, Historic Association. The Historic Association is a part of the Central Business District and I believe that some of that Intown Manchester money could be better spent at the Historic Association because they do much more service than Intown. I hate to say that, but it is much more meaningful. Right now I

want to thank you for the \$1,800 that you are going to provide for For Manchester for our garden program. We did request \$23,000. I knew we were not going to receive \$23,000, but the majority of the money; \$10,000 was asked for clean streets initiative; I have been seeing the street sweeper out a little bit more these days, so perhaps the City will address the clean streets and weeds that crop up in the medians. We also asked for \$10,000 for the Mill City Festival. Basically the Mill City Festival last year was put on by For Manchester and 15 volunteers spent hundreds of hours putting on the festival for the City. We took over Riverfest. It was a risk. It was challenging, but we made it happen. We did not ask any money for this festival last year. In fact, we did bring in...basically we paid the City \$4,000 in Police and we also paid roughly \$1,500 for the bandstand and a staff person. We brought in 4,500 people to the City. We provided a trolley that brought people around the downtown area for them to be better familiar with the City. So For Manchester is asking, perhaps we won't get \$10,000, right now it looks like we're not getting anything, but we really would like perhaps the City to fund the Police portion of the Mill City Festival. I also do want to let you know that For Manchester is working with the New Hampshire African community. I have a meeting with Mariatou every other week and looking to see how For Manchester can assist in raising funds, and I met with Hot Couch 15 individuals from different non-profits to assist the Hot Couch effort. For Manchester does a lot more than put on events and keep the City streets clean, we really assist other non-profits and help connect the dots. So if you can fund part of the Mill City Festival, part of the money goes into our funds for administration costs, which allows myself to go out and assist these other non-profits.

Ellen Healy stated:

Thank you for taking the time to listen. I am a teacher at Central High School and I'm also the President of Manchester Education Association. I am here on behalf of the over 1,200 teachers in the Manchester School District. If you read the Manchester *Union Leader* over the past few days, you would notice that Manchester teachers and their students have received many accolades. Teachers and their students have received honors at the National FIRST Robotics Competition. Teachers and their students have received honors for participating in statewide music competitions. Teachers and their students have received awards for participating in reading, publishing, and oratorical contests. One and a half pages of the Union Leader were devoted to printing honor roll lists from the three public high schools. There are pictures in the local paper of teachers and students at all grade levels participating in numerous community service activities. Teachers and their students are honored each month at the Board of School Committee meetings for various accomplishments. The dropout rate has decreased with the addition of various dropout prevention programs. A curriculum for gifted and talented elementary education has recently been developed. Teachers are working above and beyond State certification requirements to meet the Federal legislation for highly qualified as defined in the No Child Left Behind Federal law. Teachers are doing all this and more in an atmosphere that is more dangerous today than ever before. There are numerous reports of children as young as five years of age exhibiting violent behavior. By not fully funding the requested budget figures,

you are certain to increase class sizes and that may lead to even more dangerous situations. By not fully funding the requested budget figures, you are almost certain to reverse the recent decline in student dropout numbers. We say here because we love what we do. We care about the children we teach, and our community service demonstrates that we care about our community. In 1988 teachers agreed to help the City out of a fiscal crisis by changing from a 21 pay period to a 26 pay period year. In 1988 it was estimated that this short-term fix would realize over \$6 million for the City. We still have not returned to the original 21 pay period year. I can only guess the dollar amount that it saves the City in today's economy. Ladies and gentlemen, Manchester is the Queen City, and as such, should lead the way in education reform and quality. Any dollar amount less than the Mayor's request would seriously jeopardize quality education in this City. We can not afford to go backwards. Please fund education and vote for the Mayor's requested School District budget. This Board surely does not want to be remembered as the Board that voted to stack them deep and teach them cheap.

Michael Farley, 630 Hevey Street, stated:

I'm here simply as a private citizen to state my opinion concerning the School funding issue. My specific focus is going to be the education component of the budget. I've lived in Manchester virtually my whole life and I've watched for decades as the City has taken a one step forward, two step backward kind of approach to things. It has not been successful and it looks like that approach may be on the verge on changing right now, right here. Last year heralded a great new beginning for the Manchester School District and that has actually shown results. We're going to be seeing improved facilities and we're already seeing improved graduation rates. This year's budget presents a choice between quality education and second rate instruction and for my way of thinking quality education is must more important. The main factor in drawing quality people, quality employers, and a quality tax base to any city, is the education and a well-educated workforce. Quality teachers are the main component of a quality education. I think education should not be seen as an expense alone, but rather as an investment in ourselves and if you look at it that way, I think it takes on a little bit more value. I really believe right now, right here that the future of our City is at stake and I'm here simply, briefly to ask you, all of you, to support the Mayor's budget proposals so far as they relate to education.

John Peroni stated:

We appreciate you allowing us to speak here tonight as we are residents of Hooksett and Candia and we come representing SAU 15. I am presently the Chairman of SAU 15 and to my left and right are members of the School Boards in Candia and Hooksett (John Piermont and JoAnne McHugh). We come here tonight...as you know the people of Hooksett, Candia, and Auburn have signed 20-year agreements to send our high school students here and as part of that agreement is the construction presently going on a Central, at Memorial, and at West High School and we're very excited about that. But the agreement is about much more than just the buildings, the classrooms and cafeteria and whatever. It is also

about the educational standards. Part II of the agreement states that Manchester represents and warrants that it will during the term of the agreement provide a course of studies to grades 9 through 12 with the necessary facilities, equipment, supplies, text books, teachers, and administration so that all Manchester high schools qualify as components of high schools in accordance with New Hampshire Statutes and State standards and accredited by the New England Association of Secondary Schools and Colleges, Inc. by the Commission of Public Secondary Schools. Part of the State standards are 306.16 states in grades 3 through 12 class size will not exceed 30 students except in the labs classrooms it shall not exceed 24. Presently in the Manchester high schools there are over 100 classes that exceed those standards. So we are very concerned that any decrease in the budget will just increase that number classes exceeding the State standards. We realize that education comes at a cost. Our three towns will next year be sending over \$1.9 million more to the City of Manchester in order to educate our high school students, but we hope that we can continue to not only maintain but increase the standards that we have in these high schools.

JoAnne McHugh stated:

With me this evening I brought a chart that lists amongst all three high schools the number of classes that are over the 30 to 1 teacher ratio and I'd like to leave this...I'm sorry I did not make copies for everyone here, so I'm just going to leave the copy itself. I'd like you to have that along with as Mr. Peroni stated a copy of the State standard for grades 3 through 12, what the student teacher ratio is. And I also would like to encourage you to really seriously consider the Mayor's budget with regard to the School District's budget for the upcoming year. Without that I think you're looking at a very, very difficult year as far as the School District in order to find cuts to amount to what the consideration is at this point and I would like to impress upon you to really look at that very, very closely. I know it's a very, very difficult but as someone said earlier, the money that you spend now is well worth it as opposed to spending it later for issues of students who have not been educated.

Bill Zargas stated:

I'm from Candia. I was one of the negotiators of the contract from the sending towns. In this negotiation what we believed to be a partnership between the City of Manchester and the sending towns. The biggest opposition we had to the contract was the fact that historically there have been cuts in education whenever it was needed to balance the budget and there were problems in the towns that it would be business as usual in Manchester. So on behalf of the people that I represented on the school board and in that negotiation, I would encourage to please pass the Mayor's budget without cuts in the education department and we can maintain the partnership and eliminate any of the concerns that our towns have when they signed this contract.

Kathy Staub, 374 Laurel Street, stated:

I am the President for the Manchester Coalition for Quality Education, which is a parent group committed to improving Manchester City schools. I also have two children in the

Manchester public schools. I have a son in fourth grade and I have a daughter that's a freshman in high school and I'm here tonight in support of the Mayor's budget. I've been coming to these hearings for about five years; in fact I was here at that budget hearing where the City budget went up 16 percent and every year it's the same thing. Everyone feels that we can't afford to pay what we need for our schools. The only that's changed are the faces. In fact, we could elect 14 new Aldermen, a different Mayor and an entirely new School Board, and we'd still have the same problem. I think we need to think about what the problem is. The problem is not that our School District overspends, because it doesn't. It's as lean as it can get. Basically you have a teacher, you have a student and you have a classroom. There's no money for curriculum development, there's no money for teacher training, and I still have parents coming up to me and saying my daughter is flunking English, my daughter is flunking Science, I'd be happy to help her at home but she doesn't have a textbook that she can take with her. Because we spend so little money, there are very, very few communities in this State that spend less than we do. In fact, the average cost per student is \$7,809. That's what the average community spends. We spend \$6,545 per student, which is considerably less and it has a negative impact on the success of our students. And I'm not saying that's not possible to make our schools more efficient, and that's why our organization, MCQE, is calling for the School District to develop a strategic plan for our schools with the participation of elected officials, teachers, educators, the public, the business community, in order to see if some changes can be made to improve the quality of education in our community. I don't think that the spending in the school side is the problem. We do have a problem in that we have a relatively small tax base and it's very difficult for us to support our school system. We're property poor and we have a lot of homeowners with low and fixed incomes. As a result, it's difficult for us to raise enough revenue to support our own schools and this only going to get considerably worse if we start getting less money from the State. Finally, \$11 million is a lot of money, but I'd like to remind you that \$5 million of the budget increase is a direct result of action taken last spring by this Board on the design/building construction bond. The School Board's proposal put off the first debt payment until FY 2006, which kept the debt service at \$9 million. In order to secure enough votes to pass the bond, the Board of Aldermen required that the debt begin to be paid back during this fiscal year. Most of the increase will be borne by the sending towns and Manchester's share will be about \$1 million. Never the less, that all shows up in this year's budget and it's a result of an action that you took.

Glenn Ouellette, 112 Auburn Street, stated:

You people have made decisions in the last year and now we're faced with the burden. Although there are some Aldermen in this Board who voted in favor of those decisions but now are trying to go back. We can't do that to our kids. You voted for \$105 million to expand our schools and now you want to eliminate 54 teachers, 20 janitors. Last year you promised the people that you would budget \$800,000 for the next three years for books. You are not cutting that out of the budget. Why did we spend \$105 million to expand schools if we're not going to use them? If you lay off teachers, some of the people here who are

talking about more than 30 students per teacher, it's definitely going to go higher. Let's not go backwards. I'm proud of my city. I just spent six days in Hartford, CT. Do you know that they cut 25 percent of their Fire and Police departments? But they are a dying city. They went from 170,000 people to 121,000. We are a living city. Our City is growing. We are the second fastest growing city in New England. We are going good things with this city. We do need to cut the budget in some areas, but if you're going to cut \$3 million out of the school budget, then you Aldermen need to cut the City budget by the same amount. Let's not jump on the education of our students. They are, after all, are the bloodline of the future of Manchester. The last thing I want to say is that I've been here for 18 years, and when I first came here the mills were empty. The most populated part of the mills were birds. There were trees growing out of roofs. We've come a long way. So please let's not go back. As it comes to the baseball field, you people decided last year to vote \$27.5 million in bonding out of the taxpayer's pockets. Fine, you've made that decision. But keep your words. You've made three architectural forums so far in the baseball department. Three different stadiums that have come out in the newspaper since you started and as we see new ones and new ones, they get cheaper and cheaper and cheaper. I don't think we want to see a tin stadium for \$19 million.

Stephen Abbot, 239 Harrison Street, stated:

I've heard a few of the details of the alternative budget and it sounds like it dares to think out of the box. The Mayor's budget sounds like it dares to maintain status quo and that's unfortunate. A five percent increase doesn't sound like much, but it doesn't sound very creative either. The 2.9 percent increase being proposed by Aldermen Guinta and Garrity would give a raise to some City employees; it doesn't sound like it has massive layoffs. I keep hearing about layoffs, I didn't hear that in little bits and pieces that I've heard of the proposal and a two percent raise sounds pretty good in a sluggish economy. School spending is up 5.8 percent in the Mayor's budget. I wonder if some hard questions have been asked of the School District. For instance, step raises. They are pretty controversial. I know some of you up here on the Board oppose them. I'd like to see a little more public discussion about that. Also I'd like to see a little more public/private partnerships in the schools. Businesses need to step up to the plate and be asked if they can participate in children's education. That would surely find some savings there. On the City side, bag and tag is just one approach to recycling. Recycling is a great idea and increasing it is a great idea. But I wonder why that one approach is the only approach that's being pushed at this point. I think if check in some of the neighboring towns they've had some very creative ideas for recycling and finding good savings there. As I said, I know a little bit about the alternative budget being proposed. It sounds like it's a creative proposal. I think it deserves a full hearing, it doesn't need to be shut down, people deserve to hear the other side and decide what to do then.

Raymond Buckley, 23 Gabrielle Street, stated:

I am newly re-elected to my seventh year as Chairman of the Manchester City Democrats. Members of the Board, what you must be faced with at every meeting is what exactly is

Manchester pride and what is Manchester's future going to be. Is it a vibrant downtown, safe streets, quality schools, good jobs, affordable housing, and will the people have faith in their leaders. Manchester's not the city that it was just a very few years ago. It is now a positive, upbeat, hopeful place to live, work, and even play. I attribute that sense of pride to the choices that the people of Manchester have made on election day. They selected leaders who offered a positive, upbeat, and hopeful message, but last week as I sat in my home and witnessed the meeting that occurred in this chamber, all I heard was echoes of the failed past. The pennywise and pound foolish failed past, the empty rhetoric failed past. It is my deep hope that this Board will take a collection deep breath, because after all you have six weeks of work ahead of you to forge a responsible City budget. This Board is operating without any factual basis on the amount of State education aid, plans are fluctuating at the State House by millions of dollars daily, wouldn't it be not more responsible to wait until you actually get some sense of how much you're actually going to get before you start encouraging the pink slipping of dozens of the public school teachers. After years of neglect the City of Manchester's public education is finally slowly moving in the right direction. We're still well below, as you just heard, the State average cost per pupil. We're still well below. Would it be not more responsible to search for real and realistic savings rather than just simply trying to use the empty rhetoric of slash and burn cuts? What I witnessed on MCTV last week concerned me greatly. We must not deviate from our mission of creating a better and more hopeful Manchester. We must keep in mind that City elections are a year and a half away folks. A year and a half away. Using campaign rhetoric on this Board at this time I think was inappropriate and imprudent. I think what all of you have to do is look back to see who is sitting in those seats. Was it you or the person that ran against you? To take up the flag of the people that you defeated, doesn't make much sense to me. Using simplistic campaign and alarmist rhetoric, this is not the time and now is the time to leaders to rise to the occasion, have the strength to continue the tremendous progress that Manchester is experiencing. Despite the alarmist and inflamed rhetoric some, Manchester's budget is not out of control, you've already heard that it is nearly half the increase experienced under Ray Wieczorek. Because of responsible progressive leadership in City Hall, Manchester, and yes the entire City of Manchester, is experiencing an unprecedented renaissance. I strongly encourage the members of the Board to tone down their rhetoric, roll up their sleeves, and keep the progress on track, pass a responsible, prudent budget and pass a budget empty of any waste, but full of hope.

William Simmons, 142 Park Street, stated:

Mr. Mayor and Board of Aldermen, the Mayor especially. I urge you to look maybe to your right, to your left for ideas on controlling this budget. I can't afford your 8 percent increase. It was 8 percent proposed last year, it was actually 4.9 [percent], which is still too high as far as I'm concerned. Maybe you could have started last year with that wonderful bike path that goes through Ward 10 that has now become once again an open dump/sewer. I don't know about the city you're living in, but the city I live in and look around, it doesn't look like the same city I moved to two years ago. If I control my family budget the way you guys control

the City budget here, I'd be bankrupt. I can't just increase my spending by 5 percent and maintain any sort of fiscal sanity. I can't afford you tax increase, I don't want your tax increase, you might be a lame duck, maybe you choose not to run again, but some of these other gentlemen do choose, ladies also, and I'll be watching who votes where and what and working twice as hard for people that just keep increasing my taxes, will make sure that you don't maintain your positions.

Renie Denton stated:

I'm the Executive Director of the Manchester Community Resource Center located at 177 Lake Avenue, which is right in the heart of the center City between Union and Pine Streets. We provide services to the immigrants, refugees and low income population that reside here in Manchester. What we try to do is provide the services that they need in order to become self sufficient. Reduce the dependency on the social service agencies and improve their own lives. What we do is we provide job readiness, job training, job search, English as a second language, GED, childcare, any service that might increase their income, and again, reduce the dependency on the system. We thank you for the support you have given us in the past. We opened our doors in 1998 and we could not have done it without the City. The City received Federal designation as an enterprise community. We were one of the programs that was designed to provide these services. This year we come to you with a wonderful idea, a new concept, combining five agencies that all provide similar services. We're able to take limited funds, leverage the funds that the City has, increase the amount of services that we can offer, increase the expertise offered, reduce the amount of duplication and services, help the City develop their capacity, and everybody gets employment and training that requires the services. We are real excited about this combination of services. The other agencies that will be involved will be Youth Build, which will provide employment and training for teens and young adults. Community Loan Fund; they'll do small business development with New Hampshire Microcredit, they'll provide services to low income and also to the Hispanic population with small business. We'll also work with Intercede, which is an economic development program that believes that every home should have a computer. They receive donated computers, rebuild them, and then provide classes and then give out computers at a very, very reasonable price. And then the other one is City Year. City Year provides services to the middle school population. We'll work with them and develop a really innovative idea of how to provide employment competencies. Teach them about work ethics at a young age and then also at the same time provide community restoration, community revitalization. We're very, very excited about this and we thank you very much for your time.

Helen Closson, 300 River Road, stated:

I have passed around some handouts for you. Thank you so much for giving us an opportunity to talk about something which I feel very passionate and that is renovating the old trestle bridge as it would come into the community. It is an eyesore, as you all know, and we are hoping to turn that into something that is very vital and exciting and beautiful for



the community. There are several reasons for doing it, one of which it would provide excellent access for West Siders and I really like that. The bridge would also make all of the trails, not having been a walker or any of those things, I never realized far reaching these trails were. The Heritage Trail of course I knew about, but the ones that go all the way to the east coast here and also as far as New Boston. I think that's exciting for those people who are into this kind of thing. And with the new little bridge over Second Street, that would be a direct link for us too. I think that if ever there were a railroad station, which I've heard a little bit about somewhere along the line, it would be a wonderful connector for all of those things. And the bridge really would serve as a gateway to the City. It would be a stunning landmark as one enters the City, especially when lighted and I think it would show progress and speak to the pride in the City that Mayor Baines talked about in his opening comments. I really liked that and I think that's terribly important and that is key for those of us who care about this community and want to make it a better place. I think Stephanie spoke somewhat about the same kinds of things. I think the impact of such a welcoming sight would be very exciting. Can you imagine coming into town and seeing this beautiful bridge lit? I would just love that idea. With all of the wonderful plans that are now put in place and will soon be in progress, it seems as though it would be a real shame with the stadium, the condos, the retail space, not to finish off this project because I think the completion of the bridge is an important piece of this vision. For us, we see it as part of that vision, of completing that part of the community. We've done a feasibility study and have spoken to many people in the community. Nobody can escape me, unfortunately. The minute they see me they know I'm going to talk about this bridge. But we've had an incredibly sound resounding positive response and I think that it would be wonderful, especially the fact that it looks like the Notre Dame bridge, people are very excited about that. So I'm hoping that we can look for your support in the proposed budget and thank you so much for giving us this opportunity.

Fr. Mark Cooper, St. Anselms College, stated:

I want to thank the Board of Mayor and Aldermen for this opportunity to speak. I'm here to speak in favor of the Hands Across the Merrimack, which Helen has so well described and who would dare argue with Helen. This project I think is important for the future development of the City. I think it helps make the City attractive and exciting to both current and new residents. I think this project along with the Riverwalk that's already well started, the baseball stadium, creates a building block for the future of developing the riverfront, which I think could take place over a long period of time as an attractive element, which can help draw more people to the City. I've been the Treasurer at St. Anselms for 25 years and I know that needs always outstrip resources. My whole adult life has been spent trying to match revenues of the college to expenses and I know your task is not easy. But I also think that some projects are investments for the future and I think that project is such an investment in the kind of city that Manchester will become. We're asked every year by close to, we have about 3,000 applicants each year, most of those are from out of state and most of them are from out of the City area, but we are asked over and over again what kind of city is the City of Manchester. We're very proud of our City and we think this project could help

us with the answer to these student' questions. We also think that it could help the City with the answer to the same question asked by new business and by potential residents. I've seen firsthand what investment has done in the riverfront areas of both Indianapolis and San Antonio. Investment that I think has been paid back tenfold, not unlike what's been done here with the airport and the Verizon Center. I think the same thing could happen here in Manchester with the development of the river and I think this is a great building block piece of that development.

David Scannell, 938 Maple Street, stated:

It seems to me that the bridge project strikes three cords. The first one is an appreciation in this City for historic preservation that we see all over the place. You look at the cemetery project, you look at the decisions this Board and the School Board made about the school project, to maintain the beauty of the older buildings while blending them with the new buildings. The second important part is this has the added benefit of being utilitarian. It is not preserving something under glass; it's going to be useful. People are going to be able to walk over it and help the development along the river that everyone has talked about. And the third and final appealing point to this project is that it links the East Side and West Side, which is something I think we struggle about all of the time in this City and this is an important way of doing that. So I hope that we'll continue to support the project.

Roland Raiche, 290 Manning Street, stated:

I come to you to speak tonight about the budget and I'm going to speak in very general terms. Over the next few weeks I would just kind of like for everyone to keep a few things in mind. We have in this City a difficult enough time paying all of the taxes that we pay. We pay income tax and Medicaid tax and Medicare tax and Social Security tax and property tax and State and local car tax, gas tax, electricity tax, phone tax, cable tax, highway toll tax, wrong side of the street parking tax, death tax, and that's not even if you own a small business where you're paying taxes for your employees, you're paying small business tax and self employment tax, and that doesn't include health insurance and car insurance and homeowners insurance. By the time we get what we've worked for, it's hard enough to put a meatloaf on the table, so as you're going forward I think that you tread extremely lightly and remember that this is what we all have to face day to day. And I thank Alderman Guinta and Alderman Garrity for your hard work. I also would like to thank Your Honor for your words at the School Board meeting and a fight that you're willing to fight saving those 54 school teachers. That's a fight that I'm willing to fight. Let's cut the taxes and save those 54 school teachers. That's a fight that I'm willing to fight and I'll fight it every day for my four children.

Cliff Hurst, 1510 Northbrook Drive, stated:

I want to thank you for this opportunity Mayor and to the Aldermen. It was near Easter so I took my rabbit out for a walk. I was walking along and somebody said did you lose your hare and I said no he's right here. But I have a lot of happy memories of Mayor Baines before he became Mayor and still do. But he was my son's principal. I worked with him at the West High PTO and I see Mayor Baines as my friend and I want to thank him for his service to this City. I also want to thank each member of the Board for their service. I really think that public service is a very honorable thing. I had the opportunity to serving my country in the US Army and I spent 10 years of that time, most of it, overseas and some of it was during the time of the Vietnam War and that was not an easy time for our country. Our country was very divided. It was divided over the War, there were racial issues, and something happened one day when a woman came to sing in our chapel and she sang this song "If I can help somebody as I go my way, then my living will not be in vain.". I was recently elected as Chairman of the Manchester City Republican Party and I have some very, very strong feelings about politics. I believe that politics is about issues and not attacks on people. I also appreciate very much what Alderman Guinta and Garrity have done and I know you've all worked hard, but I've especially noticed what has been happening in the recent days. I'm a very strong supporter of the schools, but I also believe that ideas matter and we need to support ideas and help them happen and I want to thank all of you for your service and I'm proud to be a part of a great city, the City of Manchester.

BJ Perry III, 1080 Montgomery Street, stated:

Aldermen Frank Garrity and Mike Garrity have created an alternative budget. One that is fiscally responsible and does not cut one City service. In fact, this alternative budget not only will protect the taxpayers of Manchester, but will give a two percent pay increase to the City employees. This alternative budget has found savings adding up into the hundreds of thousands. This is a step in the right direction and I think Alderman Guinta and Alderman Garrity for their hard work. I ask this Board, especially my own Alderman, to look at this alternative budget and use it as a blueprint in shaping our City over the next year in order to keep our City growing and not break the backs of our taxpayers.

Bob Burns, 75 Greenview, stated:

I came here this evening with mixed views about this current tax increase proposal. On one aspect I've been in the market for a house lately and I've been going around the north end and since the talk of this tax increase I've noticed a lot of houses on the market all of a sudden. So in that aspect I say to myself well, gee, I'd like more houses on the market so that the price of houses can go down, but then I look at the future. I look at my future in Manchester and what I see is taxes increasing and increasing and increasing. It's great to have all of these social services and yes, things look rosy on the surface and Manchester has gotten better since my time here, but how long can this continue. If you just continue to raise the taxes, then eventually the people that you most want living here will leave. Like me. I

would like to stay in Manchester because I do love this city and I would like to have a prosperous future here but I don't see that with these current tax increase because I think it's reckless to continuously raise them this much.

David Hurst, 1510 Northbrook Drive, stated:

I come here this evening concerned about the tax increase. I am a person that works in the financial industry. I've met with many of my older clients recently who are on fixed incomes. It's an increasingly tough time for them in the current economic conditions with interest rates being as low as they are for them to really have any income out of their money. And I think it's increasingly harder when we see that pretty much everything is increasing in cost, including taxes. And I feel that this is another burden that is being added that I think a lot of people can not right now handle. I come here today also in support of Alderman Gatsas and Alderman Garrity's proposed budget, in support of that. And I would hope that everybody would view these an open idea and an open mind to take a look some other alternatives and find ways that we can pass savings along to the taxpayers of our City.

Violet Anderson, 286 Coolidge Avenue, stated:

I'm here to request your support for the Mayor's budget, specifically for the schools. I am an occupational therapist employed within the schools but I'm also here as a private citizen. The future of any country or city or state is our young people and we need to invest in them now. I feel that the last few budgets for a number of years have really been a bare bones budget. The class sizes are increasing I think and there's not the adequate budget for textbooks. Students are coming to school with more and more problems for the teachers to have to deal with. I work within the Special Ed department. I don't think there's been a significant increase in personnel within that for a number of years either. I would like to thank the Mayor for proposing a budget that did not call for teacher cuts. I think that the personnel that we have are wonderful and that we really need to maintain those. But as well as we need the space and the buildings, we also need to get the supplies of textbooks for the students. I would like to thank you all for listening to me and I hope that you will consider voting in support of the Mayor's budget.

Greg Salts, 23 Pennacook Street, stated:

This is actually my first time speaking before you as a homeowner in the City of Manchester. When I looked at your power point presentation I felt that I was actually skillfully deceived at the chart that showed the expenditure increases under your term and under the previous administration's. So I look at the chart again and I realized it would have been better for me to see a chart of proposed tax increase between this administration and the prior administration. I think an 8 percent tax increase, in my opinion, and I hate to steal a word from this Board, but is irresponsible. And I don't think it's fair to say that people who are proposing a more affordable tax increase are being irresponsible. There are ways that this City can cut the fat before I discuss some of those I'd like to thank this City for being a

destination city under the auspices of the International Institute of New Hampshire. But I actually think that this Institute may actually be the 800 pound gorilla in the City that we need to discuss publicly and honestly. I really love the diversity it brings to the City and I'm sure we get a lot of Federal fund from it, but the burden on the taxpayer from this may far exceed the amount of money we bring in if we look at the ESL in the public schools for example. So I don't know if this is an indefinite program we're going to be involved in but maybe it's time to look at the future of the direction of the City, because I think we may be harming future immigrants of the City by not being able to dedicate funds to the current generation of immigrants that we have here now. I question whether this City needs a calvary patrol in the Police Department. I understand that during the training one officer fell off the horse and is on 70 percent disability and that's a gift that keeps on giving. The young man was only in his 20's. I don't want to nickel and dime the budget but I wish I can afford to control the climate in my home the way the climate is controlled in the public buildings in the City. Right now it's a beautiful day outside, I come in here and I'm freezing and in the summer time and I go into some of the public schools and it's steaming hot. I'm curious with the budget that we have on the climate control is in the City. There is a line item for MCTV for \$308,000 but I couldn't find a line item for non-City services for the public access portion of that, which is \$180,000. The City receives under the cable franchise fees, \$1.2 million, but their dishing out to help pay like less than \$400,000, so the City's keeping an extra half a million dollars in the general fund. And I don't begrudge for doing that but I would ask that the public access portion be fully funded. If I can just throw a bone for Manchester, I was concerned when \$23,000 was requested by For Manchester and for the Mill City project. I think it wise for a city to invest some money in the arts and public venues like this and to see her only get \$1,800 I think the City could throw a few more shuckles that way.

Lionel Leblanc, 203 Belmont Street, stated:

I'm here because I'm protesting that 8 percent increase in taxes. I'd like to congratulate Aldermen Guinta and Garrity that they are going in the right direction and that's what the City has to follow. I heard from the Mayor a while back that there is 19 more unions to contract, the contracts should be terminated. I hope they don't have the first thing on their agenda to raise their wages. I'm appealing to all department heads to talk to talk to all of their workers, if a raise comes through reject it. Think about the taxpayers. We have been subsidizing you long enough. There's many for years we've been paying their health insurance. Health insurance is not just for the worker itself, it's the whole family. They've got a nice lucrative wage at our expense and it's about time they think about the taxpayers. Manchester is moving forward at our expense and us that are along in years will be too long we'll be demised. We won't be around any more, but to think about these youngsters today they'll be starting a life and they've got to be able to live in a place that they can't afford. A lot of people throughout Manchester have been going around, a lot of houses are for sale, and people shouldn't have to sell their homes where they've raised their families and move into

housing. It won't be long before they will come to a point where they don't want to live anymore.

William Dugan, 111 Wheelock Street, stated:

This evening I'm here to address the Board with reference to the School District's budget. For the past two years there has been considerable progress made toward providing for quality education in the district. The Board of School Committee conducted an open nationwide search for a new superintendent, the Board of Mayor and Aldermen supported the design/build project, the School Board under the weight of new standards imposed by the No Child Left Behind Act, have shown considerable fiscal responsibility, in fact the Board continues to pay down the debt associated with the previous administration. In addition, the administration has updated technology across the district, purchased new textbooks, reduced class size, and cut the dropout rate. Although there's still work to be done in all of these areas. Furthermore, new programs have been initiated such as the Gifted and Talented Program for the elementary schools. Be assured there's still considerable work ahead, however, this evening I choose to focus on the positive and indeed there has been progress. Now despite this progress there appears to be a knee-jerk reaction to the Mayor's budget. I won't go through the numbers because you have all of those. I will say, however, that I think the Garrity/Guinta budget or similar proposals in the \$132 million range will bring progress in the district to a screeching halt. The School Board has voted against laying off teachers. I applaud them. I also applaud the Mayor for his position on this issue. I think it shows leadership. If you're going to provide quality education, you can't cut teacher positions. Neither can you cut funding for supplies, books, technologies, programs, etc. As legislators you not only represent your constituents but you shape community priorities and norms. What message do you want to send to the community regarding education? What should we tell our children? I urge you to support the Mayor's budget.

Karen Manchester, 118 Hunters Village, stated:

I'm here as a concerned parent as well as a taxpayer. After reading the articles in the *Union Leader* this past week, I'm left wondering what the definition of irresponsible is. Is it irresponsible to keep \$3.1 million overage for the City from the State education funds last year? Is it also irresponsible to create the charge backs to the School District just to maintain buildings that the City owns? And finally, is it irresponsible to build ball fields and civic centers at the expense of the future of all our students?

Joe Kelly Levasseur, 866 Elm Street, stated:

I just really want to come and say thank you for all of you to welcome back Alderman Thibault, you do have a nice tan like you said. Welcome back. I have sat in this seat where you guys are sitting for a couple of years, it's not an easy job and I basically just want to come say thank you for your service. It's not an easy job that you're here, and again, I've said it before when the schools were built that the Mayor was elected to fix schools and the

Mayor was elected to take care of the school situation, that was what most people perceived to be the biggest problem back when the Mayor was elected and that's what he's here to do and I don't agree with you on a lot of your positions but I do at least respect the fact that you are willing to stand up and defend your position as you stated on the School Board the other night. You will not allow the budget to be cut. And we are always faced with these dilemmas because there are real people with real jobs that we don't want to see them get cut. I do want to applaud Alderman Guinta for an outstanding job on your budget proposal, it was at least a framework to work from and I don't believe that the Aldermen here are actually...there hasn't been rhetoric, I think the Aldermen have jobs, they have wards to deal with and work for, so that if you don't see something you like then you should be allowed to express your opinions and I like to see some infighting. I think that's what gets work done around here and a lot of collaboration. So keep up the good work, try to get our taxes down below 3 percent, where we can at least digest it a little bit better, but I do agree that we should try very hard to not lay off any teachers and do the best you can. As far as the spike and 16 percent that you so eloquently pointed out in your presentation, that was the year that we did receive a lot of Claremont money so a lot of money went towards...the money that we got from the State did increase the spike in spending, but if you see the years' previous to that money coming in, they are all about the same amount as they years later. The only problem I see with these proposals Mayor, is when you come out with an 8 percent proposal, it scares a lot of people off. We both know that by the time October comes around, hopefully that budget number will be down quite a bit. So hopefully the Aldermen will do their job, sharpen their pencils, and do the best you can and I just want to say I've been there before, so keep up the good work and thank you very much.

Patrice Benard, 31 Aurore Avenue, stated:

I have three children. My son is in 7<sup>th</sup> grade at McLaughlin, I have a daughter who will be starting Green Acres and a son who may be entering the developmental preschool this fall. I'm here in one sense to support the Mayor's budget, but as a mom with children with special needs I think that to give our children an appropriate and adequate education we could spend twice as much and we'd still not be meeting all of the needs of all of our students. One of the things that concerned me and that made me very upset, was the talk about not renewing positions and having actually fewer people in the buildings. This is my son's sweatshirt. He got it Parent's Night. The next day because there are not enough people in the buildings and supervision, somebody yanked on his hood to choke him and ripped the sweatshirt. It takes a lot of force to rip a sweatshirt. The cut has healed underneath his eye where he got hit with a rule because the teachers can't be everywhere all of the time. And three quarters of an inch higher and he would have lost an eye. We don't need fewer people in our schools, we need more. We need aids in every classroom. I attended Parent's Day at McLaughlin Middle School on March 11<sup>th</sup>. I encourage all of you, actually I would like to insist that all of you before voting on the school budget be responsible, go and spend a day in the school. Not a walk through tour. You're not going get it. Go and spend a day with my son, in the 7<sup>th</sup> grade at McLaughlin. Try to sit through a 40 minute class where there are 30 children which

accordingly is supposedly within State standards, but the teacher is up front and my son has a non-verbal learning disability, so he has to hear everything because he's not going to get it. The two or three conversations going on between different students in the classroom inhibit his education. We need more people. We need aids or parents in that classroom to help keep order and structure in the classroom. We don't need less and we can't get by with less. I know you say the only place to cut is in the teacher's salaries and in positions, it can't be. Our students deserve better and as a mom I'm terrified to send my child back to school where there are not enough teachers or staff members. I only made it from 7:30AM until lunchtime and I ran out of the school crying because I was so upset. I have spoke with Alderman DeVries and I thank you for returning my phone call. I have not heard yet from Alderman O'Neil, I let you a message and Alderman Lopez I was not able to reach you. But please call me. I'd be happy to talk with you about what I say on Parent's Day. Spend a day in our schools before you vote on this budget. Anything else would be irresponsible. Our children are our future and as the saying goes "Be kind to your children, they choose your nursing home."

Barbara Haines, 509 Lake Avenue, stated:

I am the founder of Glory of the Lord Ministry. I am against the proposal for \$8,000 to go to the Teen Health Clinic. We are not only dealing with dollars here, we're also dealing with souls. This clinic dispenses abort contraceptives that are given out freely to children 11 and up. The word of God states "Do not kill the innocent. Anyone laden with guilt of human blood shall be a fugitive until death. Let no one support him." Amos and the Bible prophesied years ago to the Israelites who sacrificed their babies to another god. "I did terrible things to you just as I did to Egypt. I killed your young men in war, even then you rejected me. I the Lord have spoken. I destroyed many of you just as I did the cities of Sodom and Gomorra, you are a burning stick I rescued from the fire. Even then, you rejected me. I the Lord have spoken. You people hate judges and honest witnesses, you abuse the poor and demand heavy taxes from them. I am the Lord and I know your terrible sins. You drink all of the wine you want and wear expensive perfume, but you don't care about the ruin of your nation. The Lord God all powerful has sworn by his own name. The descendents of Jacob make me angry by your pride and I hate your fortresses and so I will surrender your city in possessions to your enemies. You look forward to the day when the Lord comes to judge, but you are in for trouble. It won't be a time of sunshine, all will be darkness."

Remember 9/11. If you really want to live you must stop doing wrong and start doing right. I the Lord God all powerful will then be on your side just as you claim I am. Chose good instead of evil. See that justice is done. Maybe I, the Lord all powerful, will be kind to what is left of you people. But let justice and fairness flow like a river that never runs dry. Our forefathers provided us with religious freedom to protect us from religious persecution by the government. You have stumbled taxpayers causing us to support the killing of innocent children. In violation of the First Amendment I propose that each of you in your faith commit to pray for these young people and believe that God will answer your queries for their holiness and purity instead of choosing the destruction and the killing of babies. Please



do not vote for a budget that kills babies and corrupts our youth; please do not vote for a budget that includes supporting the Teen Health Clinic.

Keith Hirschmann, 296 Dunbarton Road, stated:

I am an unpaid and registered lobbyist on behalf of the taxpayers and the senior citizens of Manchester. Let's see, if I wanted to give out \$1,500 a month to have some lobbyist or give \$1.50 to 1,000 school teachers, I think I'd have a voice. The chart that you eloquently showed on your power point presentation Mayor, I took that course when I was a young man in college too. How to tell the truth with numbers. And yes those were the expenditures of the previous administration. I don't know why you bothered to go back that far, but I wish you would look forward and be a forward thinking Mayor. But let's go back, because those are the truths, those numbers. When I was a freshman Alderman with Willie Shea, the City school budget was \$67 million and tonight it's proposed \$138 million. On those graphs we must have gave the School Board and the teachers a heck of a lot of money because we cared about you. But guess what, we cared about the taxpayers too. On that big graph, when you said we gave away all of the money, we made sure we gave it back to the taxpayers and there was a zero percent tax increase. Show some leadership. Never mind the veto rhetoric, because there's another word out there; override. You Aldermen are all smart elected officials representing all of these school people, all the taxpayers, and us homeowners, and I trusted all of you to come up with a budget of your own. I did as a freshman Alderman, but I couldn't pass mine. Mine was a very conservative budget. Do what is right for the City; give the schools what they need, look out for the taxpayers. It's not the expenditures; it's the tax rate. If you want to lose a few more chicken plants and business and industry in this city, and then we won't be able to even live here, get an 8 percent tax increase. You want to get on board with some smart people that are raising their head above the fire, young men putting together a proposal, taking heat in the newspaper from a Mayor that's being a bully. I don't appreciate that. Be a leader for these young men, show them what leadership is, work for the taxpayers, work for the seniors, it's not just a building, a senior center, this seniors have to live in their homes. Were we responsible for education? You bet we were. When that windfall came from Concord, we gave it to the schools and gave it to the taxpayers. Did you build buildings? Yes, and we did too. Parkside; we redeveloped Parkside because it needed it. We filled the classrooms with extra teachers because it needed it, but we always look out for the taxpayers. These lobbyists that you're hiring, those are the things that kill the taxpayers. You people are our lobbyists. If you people can't go to Concord once a year and fight for us, then we have to go ourselves. I know Kevin Clougherty was in Concord all of the time as a department head, as well as other department heads. I know Senator Gatsas is there fighting on our behalf, on my behalf, thank you Senator. That's what we need. We need leadership and I think there's probably about half of you that are on board, I'm asking the rest of you to come on.

Mike Bodruk, 328 Aaron Drive, stated:

That's a tough act to follow. First off let me preface this by telling you that I am a SEA member, Chapter 45 and I applaud Craig Benson for digging in his heels and telling us to go to hell. And I think it's about time for you public servants to tell your employee unions that it's time to give something back to the taxpayer. There's ways to restructure the way they get paid. A guy shouldn't get paid for just showing up every day and not doing anything. Raises should be based on merit and that's the way it should be and employees pay for their benefits or whatever you want to call them, that needs to be changed. Because my work takes me out into the public sector, talking to those employees in these facilities that I go in, and the things that they have to do with their paychecks, I am embarrassed sometimes. It is about time that you people dug in your heels, tell these unions, including MEA and everybody else, that it's got to stop. The rank and file people out in the town didn't get a raise. As the Jac Pac employees how much of a raise they got this year. I read in the paper today there's more people laying off and some of these things. People are not getting raises and I think the public employees for the time being, when the times are bad, should be with us and when the times are good, fine, give them more money.

Will Infantine, 89 Winward Lane, stated:

You have proposed an 8 percent tax increase. For me that would result in an extra \$416 per year or about \$35 a month. Now on the surface that doesn't sound like much, but that's on top of \$425 a month I already pay. I'm fortunate. I can afford that, but I would choose not to afford it. I take exception to some comments that I've heard that the Board has to determine what the residents of Manchester can afford. I don't think that's your job to determine what I or other citizens in this City can afford. Your job is to govern. Governing at its simplest form is making choices. So I would ask you to make the following choices. I would ask you to choose to consolidate. The American way; efficiency. Being more productive. With the help of some other folks it is not legal to consolidate the School Board and have them become a department of the City. I would ask you to choose to do that in November and put it on the ballot. The same way you're proposing to increase the Mayor's salary. Two issues I both agree with. I ask you to choose to do something with Yarger/Decker. You all know what needs to be addressed. You all know what needs to be done. You need to make hard choice. The choice that will anger some, but it's the right choice. MCTV; don't separate out MCTV, consolidate it. Keep it the way it is. Address the problem that exists there. The ineffective management at the top. That's what needs to be addressed. Don't separate it out, and don't take money from it. Last year to the best of my knowledge over a million dollars was received and/or paid by people that have cable. Of that, \$400,000 or so went to MCTV, \$600,000 to the City. Cutting MCTV's budget doesn't save the taxpayers money, it just transfers it from one place another. Please make the correct choice there. And finally Mr. Mayor regarding bag and tag, believe it or not, I agree with that. I think that's the right choice. I have four recycling bins. I would like you to initiate a pilot program where you would come to someone like me and say Mr. Infantine we'll give

you \$300 or \$400 off your taxes and you will have to do this. That way I am not subsidizing others who don't. It's all about choices. Tonight is my 7<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary. I dragged my wife, an elected City official here tonight, because I felt it was important enough to speak to you about these choices. Now I will take my wife out to dinner and thank you very much for the nice new cushions behind us.

Jeff Kassel, 22 Appleton Street, stated:

I was kind of interested in what Will said today about the MCTV budget, the franchise fee because the truth really is the City takes half of that money and keeps it in their own coffers. It's the franchise fee to give people access to a public forum so that they can make their feelings known about the management of the City among other things. As people probably know there's an educational channel, a public access channel for the public, and a government channel and they're getting better. But the City is essentially stealing some of that cable money. It's not even taxes. They're taking money and using it for their own purposes. Basically taking that money and giving it to employees of the City, generally. I mean you could look at it that way. And I feel the same way about my taxes. I've come here before to give you the statistic. When I moved here in Manchester 25 years ago, my taxes were \$730 a year. Now they're \$4,100 a year and that rate of increase if I live another 25 years, my taxes will be \$20,000 a year and people are failing to project what these kinds of increases are going to be over the long haul. You simply can not take money from people who live in a city and give it to other people. It's theft. You may call it taxes, but really its theft because I didn't agree to give this City \$4,100. They just take it from me and if I don't pay it, they'll take my house. Right? So I would really like to ask the people sitting in this chamber is to show some respect for me as a taxpayer and for other people that really don't enjoy writing these big checks to the City. But you look at the school budget and I seen representations of the School District, I prefer to call them the educational industrial complex. The City budget this year, the lion's share, is schools and there is simply not an endless, infinite amount of money that can be poured into the schools and there's got to be reform of the educational system. Well Mayor Baines was a school teacher and a principal, frankly I've been a school teacher myself in the public system and at the university level. There are ways to control these costs if you have the will. But if you're captive, the education industrial complex or the municipal union complex, where there are 3,000 votes in this city and you're afraid you might not get elected. I can understand why you would exceed to their demands for greater salaries, but the average teacher in this town makes \$49,000 a year for potentially nine months of work. It's a lot of money and it's coming out of our hide.

Maxine Mosley, 76 Sherwin Street, stated:

I am a single parent homeowner, Manchester School District employee, I was Mayor Baines' first employee hire in the City of Manchester and I'm still here. Basically what I wanted to say to you is first of all I respect everybody on the Board and you're trying to do the best job you can and as a taxpayer I appreciate that. Things have changed. I haven't seen many of

you in the schools; I echo what Mrs. Benard said, who is a parent. Come visit for a day, walk with me for a day, the kids have changed, the needs have changed. Whatever you do about the budget, whatever you do about the money, the reality is life is not what it was when I moved in here 24 years ago. My daughter is about to graduate from Central High School and go onto college for teacher education training. Many, many young people will not consider education as a viable career path. Part of that responsibility is what's happening in our new casts. Educators are slammed every day; misunderstood. I'm not here to ask you for more money for me. My taxes will go up, I choose to live in this City and I choose to work in this City. That's my choice. I choose to pay for the services that my daughter has received and the other students have received. That's my choice. I venture that my daughter would not have received a more quality education in Amherst, NH than she did at Central High School. Come walk with us for a day. Putting 34 students in a classroom with the profiles that they have today is different than when I was in school and then when you were in school.

Tammy Simmons, 142 Parker Street, stated:

I'm the wife of the working stiff. I've listened to many people talk today about different things. Some people looking for funding, some people opposed to the Mayor's budget. I came here completely against the Mayor's budget and more supportive Alderman Garrity and Alderman Guinta's alternative budget or budgets as they may be. I whole heartedly believe that things can be done without any tax increase whatsoever. It happens in our personal lives, it can happen at the City level. While listening to other people I got on the thought about vision. As much as I know Father Mark is a good man and I'm sure these wonderful people have a wonderful vision of this bridge that they want to build over the Merrimack River. Perhaps they should get the vision of what the bike path on the West Side actually looks like in reality because it's a cesspool. It's been there for one year, it's filled with mattresses, it's not maintained by the City, they've planted grass where nobody can mow, it's a waste of the taxpayer's money. We put all sorts of money into it and it has not improved anything and putting more money into that project just seems like a waste of my hard earned dollars. I also heard the woman who was speaking just before me talking about how things have changed in the schools, and granted all of us know that those things have changed. Unfortunately while they would like us to walk a day in their shoes at the schools, I'd like them to spend a day in my life trying to figure out how I can pay more taxes to the City of Manchester. Before looking at vision, we should look at a long term vision of how we can keep homeowners in Manchester rather than having people move into this community, find out that their taxes are going to go up year after year after year, on the claims that services will be cut, when there are alternative ways to fund things without cutting those services. And Alderman Guinta has pointed many of those out. Many of the teachers come up and say that we're going to cut their salaries. That's totally not true. I heard Alderman Guinta explain it. His proposed budget has a two percent increase; perhaps they don't understand the difference between decrease and increase. Increase in their salary, which is more than I can say for my salary, more than I can say for my husband's salary, and

I bet more than I can say for most of the people sitting in this room. So for them to be out there scaring the taxpayer into we're cutting their salaries, is just wrong, because there is not cut in their salary, there is an increase in their salary, and if that's not good enough, to have two percent more than the average person paying their salary, than I don't know what is good for them. I guess obviously 8 percent would be better.

Mayor Baines advised that all wishing to speak having been heard, the comments presented shall be taken under consideration with actions by the Board and reports by the Committee on Finance to be made at a later date and a motion to adjourn is in order.

On motion of Alderman Garrity, duly seconded by Alderman Forest, it was voted to adjourn.

A True Record. Attest.

City Clerk